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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, September 13, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Business for Homebodies." Information from the Extension Service,
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Many a housekeeper who still believes that woman's place is in the home has gone into business during these last few hard years. Women living on farms and in villages have learned how to turn their housekeeping knowledge into profit and carry on business at home.

For example, there is a Mrs. Sharon who lives on a farm in Colorado and who has been making a good income from her own, home-made cream cheese. She attended a county meeting where the state dairy specialist demonstrated the making of American cheese and went home and began making cheese herself and selling it for fifteen cents a pound. Perhaps you'd like to hear her own story of her start in business. She writes: "Like so many others, I found that as time went on with prices of farm products dropping lower, with less production than usual because of the drought, with only half enough feed for the stock to get through the winter, and with expenses as high as ever, I had a real problem ahead of me. I tried to think of some way in which a person like myself could make a little money.

"Then an idea struck me. Why couldn't I make real cream cheese of my own? The home demonstration club had taught us to make American cheese, but that called for whole milk and we needed the cream. So I tried another recipe. Since October I have made 208 pounds. Soon my friends who did not have the milk and could afford to buy were paying me fifteen cents a pound for this new, soft, cream cheese."

Down in North Carolina one rural housewife is making a good income by weaving corn-shuck hats. The home demonstration agent in her county gave a demonstration in the spring to show the women how they could make their own hats for nothing by using the waste product -- corn shucks. Well, Mrs. Mack Blakely went home from that meeting and made such attractive hats that all her neighbors wanted to buy them and, after buying, came back for more. She was so successful in her own neighborhood that the agent wrote a little story about her shuck hats for the home-town newspaper. Papers all over the country copied that story and presently Mrs. Blakely was getting mail orders from New York to California and south to Florida. She can make one of these attractive shuck hats in less than a day and charges a dollar apiece for them. She also makes and sells good-looking shuck purses.

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Another South Carolina woman sold enough shrubs from her nursery during the year to pay her son's yearly college expenses.

Then here's the story of the Florida housekeeper who has done so well in the honey business. She writes: "On May first I started with one stand of bees, which had been given to me. In June I bought five hives because I was so interested and thought bees should do well in this country. By the end of the first year the number of my hives had increased to sixty and the bees had produced 1405 pounds of honey. The honey is light in color and has a delicious taste. It took first prize at the Everglades Fair and also at the Palm Beach Home Demonstration Exhibit. I strain it and put it up in neat attractive containers with attractive labels. The containers range from gallon size to 3-ounces packs.

"I make vinegar from the cappings and wax from the comb, which I also sell."

The rural woman's market in Frederick County, Virginia, has added needed cash to many a family pocketbook. Twenty-eight women were selling at this market each Saturday during the year and the total sales ranged from \$82 to \$200 for the day. Sometimes as many as 81 different products were there for sale. Dressed poultry took the lead as the best seller with butter and cakes ranking second best.

One woman says that she could not possibly have fed her poultry or stock last winter if she hadn't made money at the market. Another woman financed the hatching, feeding and raising of 250 turkeys and 350 chickens from her market sales. She also built a brooder house with some of the money she made.

Through selling on this market, one woman has worked up an extensive trade outside and sells her breads, cakes and cookies to people in four states and the District of Columbia. The market started another woman out selling her home-made butter. She has sold over 1000 pounds since the first of January. Still another now has a good trade in mint candy and frequently furnishes mints for parties, receptions and so on. Many good cake-makers turn this talent into profit. One sells over 35 cakes a month regularly.

This Virginia market sells other home products besides foods. One woman sold over \$90 worth of bittersweet during the year; another made \$25 on ever-greens; several have made money on walnut kernels, land cress and watercress.

A farm woman's market in West Virginia is also responsible for starting many women out in their own businesses. One homemaker makes a good income selling her very fine angel food and "bromstone front" cake. Another sells homemade bread each week and also such seasonal products as surplus fresh vegetables from her garden, unusual garden flowers, and her own butter and cheese. Rolls and doughnuts are another woman's specialty.

There's a small market in Texas where five women have been selling their wares every Wednesday and Saturday. Their net sales amounted to over two thousand dollars during the year with a net profit of \$1252. At this market the best sellers have been fresh vegetables, poultry, dairy products, cakes, hot tamales, pecans, fresh pork and sirup.

Time is about up. I still have more money-making stories to tell you. But I guess I'll have to save them for some other day.

